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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE
RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 225th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 26 November 1996, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. KA (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

2. The CHAIRMAN said that the two draft resolutions covering the programme of work of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights were similar to the resolutions adopted in 1995 but had been updated. The draft resolution on the work of the Department of Public Information was also similar to the 1995 resolution, although some changes had been made. Paragraph 1 had been replaced by the following text: "Notes that several defined provisions of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information are yet to be implemented, and stresses the importance of implementation in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions". Subparagraph (f) of paragraph 3 had also been amended and read as follows: "To provide, in cooperation with the relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development, including the training for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists". It was understood that provision for the programme of work entailed by those three resolutions had been made in the 1996-1997 programme budget of the Organization.

3. Ms. DARMANIN (Malta) proposed an amendment to the resolution concerning the Department of Public Information. In order to avoid possible confusion with regard to the meaning of paragraph 1, she proposed that the last part of the sentence, which read "the importance of implementation in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions", should read "the importance of implementation of all provisions of the programme". The end of the sentence would read "and stresses the importance of implementation of all provisions of the programme".

4. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolutions covering the programme of work of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information, the last resolution incorporating the amendment proposed by the representative of Malta.

5. It was so decided.

6. The CHAIRMAN said that the draft resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine had been amended by the addition of a new eleventh preambular paragraph, which read: "Noting also with satisfaction the successful holding of the Palestinian general elections,". The thirteenth preambular paragraph had been reworded and read as follows: "Noting the establishment of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories and its positive contribution,". A new fifteenth preambular paragraph had also been added and read as follows: "Concerned over the serious difficulties facing

the Middle East peace process and the deterioration of the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people, as a result of the Israeli positions and measures,".

7. Paragraph 2 had been reworded to include a specific reference to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995. Paragraph 3 had also been reworded, and read as follows: "Stresses the necessity for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement;". Paragraph 4 was new and read as follows: "Calls upon the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and the entire international community to exert all the necessary efforts to ensure the success of the peace process;". The remainder of the draft resolution was the same as the resolution adopted in 1995.

8. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

9. It was so decided.

10. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Permanent Observer for Palestine) informed the members of the Committee about other resolutions related to the question of Palestine which would be considered by the General Assembly. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) would consider various resolutions relating to two main themes: the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. With regard to UNRWA, Ireland would introduce, on behalf of the European Union, a resolution on assistance to Palestine refugees, the wording of which would for the most part be the same as that of the resolution adopted in 1995. The Committee would also consider a draft resolution concerning the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which would be introduced by the representative of the Netherlands, and which would be similar to the resolution adopted in 1995. The text of the third resolution, concerning persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, was also very similar to that of the resolution adopted in 1995. The fourth resolution, concerning offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for Palestine refugees, would also be similar to the resolution adopted in 1995. A draft resolution concerning operations of UNRWA, the text of which had been slightly reworded, would also be introduced. The resolution on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues had been substantially reworded, following extensive negotiations with various Member States, with a view to obtaining greater support and approval. The text no longer focused on the income derived from the property of Palestine refugees but rather on the property itself and refugees' property rights. The draft resolution also requested the Secretary-General to modernize the existing records, using electronic means. He hoped that the Division for Palestinian Rights would provide assistance in that task. Finally, a draft resolution would be introduced concerning the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine

refugees, the text of which was almost identical to that of the resolution adopted in 1995. He expected that those draft resolutions concerning the operations of UNRWA would be approved by an overwhelming majority, although the opposition of at least one State Member would not permit their adoption by consensus.

11. With regard to the report of the Special Committee, a draft resolution would be introduced concerning the mandate of that body, with a text similar to the resolution adopted in 1995. A draft resolution reaffirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the occupied Palestinian territory would also be introduced. The text did not differ from that of the resolution adopted in 1995. A new text would be introduced of a resolution on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, which contained paragraphs from the 1995 resolution on that matter, as well as paragraphs taken from a resolution previously introduced in the Second Committee. In that draft resolution, the sponsors had sought to simplify work in that field and focus the attention of the international community on that most important issue. Although a new text, the result of negotiations, was involved, he was confident that it would be adopted by an overwhelming majority. A draft resolution would also be introduced on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, the text of which was similar to that of the resolution adopted in 1995; the paragraphs concerning settlements had been deleted and new paragraphs concerning the extremely sensitive issue of the closure of frontiers had been added. A further draft resolution would be considered on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan, the text of which was similar to that of the resolution adopted by a large majority in 1995.

12. In view of the deteriorating situation in the territory, there were new reasons for the international community to send a clearer message to Israel, the occupying Power, and to increase its support for the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices. He hoped that the Special Political and Decolonization Committee would proceed along those lines and that the General Assembly would take action in accordance with the Committee's recommendations.

13. He drew the Committee's attention to the draft resolution on United Nations public information policies and activities contained in the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (A/51/594). The new text of paragraph 29 of that draft resolution requested that the Department of Public Information should be provided with an identification of all costs, including estimated man-hours and printing, publishing and material expenditures, arising from mandates contained in resolutions other than the annual resolution of the General Assembly as recommended by the Committee on Information. Due consideration had not been given to that paragraph, which established a new procedure that would greatly complicate the work of the Department and would have obvious repercussions on the implementation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine. He expressed his opposition to the proposed measure and hoped that the General Assembly would adopt appropriate provisions. Many Member States had stressed that financial aspects should be

dealt with by the Fifth Committee and that resolutions adopted by other Committees should not contain paragraphs relating to financial matters. Procedural matters should not be used to flout the will of the international community as expressed by the General Assembly.

14. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Bureau of the Committee should hold consultations on the matter to consider ways of amending the paragraph in question. He believed that the Department of Public Information would have no objection, since the General Assembly had not yet taken a decision on the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.